



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appl. No. : 10/019,676  
Applicant : Sam Fong Yau LI et al.  
Filed : April 8,2002  
TC/A.U. : 1648  
Examiner : Zachariah Lucas  
  
Docket No. : 2977-1 18  
Customer No. : 06449  
Confirmation No. : 7819  
Title : A NOVEL IMMUNO-DIAGNOSTIC TEST METHOD FOR VETERINARY DISEASE  
  
Director of Patents  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 223 13-1450

**RULE 132 DECLARATION OF YAP HIM-HOO**

Sir:

I, Yap Him-Hoo, hereby declare as follows:

1. I hold a Bachelor of Veterinary Science (received with honors, 1994) from the University of Queensland, Australia, and a Masters of Preventive Veterinary Medicine from the University of California, Davis (2003). In 1996, I joined the Primary Production Department, now known as the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA).

2. I am currently the Head of the Animal, Meat & Seafood Regulatory Branch of the Food and Veterinary Administration of the AVA. One function of the branch is the inspection and sampling of imported consignment of live poultry and eggs. The samples are sent to AVA laboratories for testing, which include detection of pathogens, such as salmonella enteritidis. AVA uses a variety of methods to accomplish this, including ELISA, rapid slide agglutination test and isolation.

My branch is responsible in the inspection of poultry and eggs arriving at the main checkpoint from Malaysia. I personally led the inspection team after the ban on imports of poultry and eggs from Malaysia was lifted in 2004 (the suspension was due to bird flu). Attached to this Declaration are excerpts from the AVA website ([www.ava.gov.sg](http://www.ava.gov.sg)) providing details of AVA's activities, and its role and expertise in testing the food supply for safety and quality.

3. Singapore imports virtually all the food its citizens consume, including live pigs, poultry and eggs. Thus, when these animals arrive with illness, or become ill, there is a potential risk to both public health and animal health. Veterinarians in Singapore and in particular those carrying out the tasks of the AVA, therefore play an important role in protecting public health and animal health.

4. My role as Head of the Animal, Meat & Seafood Regulatory Branch of the Food and Veterinary Administration of the AVA involves not only the technical aspects of disease, but also negotiation with counterparts from other countries concerning the import and export of livestock and their products. Thus, my responsibilities require that I be familiar with many topics, including methodologies for disease control and eradication, and detecting and estimating the prevalence of pathogens in animals and their products.

5. I have reviewed the prior art references the patent Examiner has cited in connection with the above-identified U.S. patent application. After examining the cited references, I was asked to consider whether the described piezoelectric sensors could possibly be re-used following a negative test result. My reaction was that they could be, but that they obviously would need to be washed first to remove any contamination. Otherwise, in my opinion, the sensors would not work properly with accurate results.

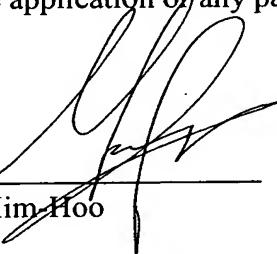
6. I was surprised to learn that the device that is the subject of the present application could in fact be successfully reused without a washing step. I believe that it is only logical to wash such a previously used device before reuse, and not doing so would be unusual.

7. As noted, much of the egg testing done by my organisation requires taking samples for laboratory testing. A piezoelectric sensor and method that allows for testing of salmonella and other pathogens without a washing step could prove to be useful on the field. Such a method, in my opinion, would be suited for use in the field than methods requiring a wash step, and would cut down on the time taken for testing. The convenience and if the kit is accurate, could save costs and increase efficiency.

8. In my opinion, based on my knowledge and experience in conducting field test in chickens, any field officer would be grateful if there is an accurate test kit, which can be reused without a wash step.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

Signed:

  
Yap Him-Hoo

Date: 2 March 2006

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## Global Challenges

*Continued from page 1*

two deaths suspected of being associated with the 2003 outbreak to date.

Another disease of current concern is severe acute respiratory syndrome, SARS. Initial reports indicated that this virus is present in palm civets, a delicacy in China. Hong Kong veterinarians may play a crucial role in unraveling the SARS reservoir mystery.

**Dr. Hian-Hooi Yap** did his national service in the Singapore Artillery for a year before the Singapore government offered him a scholarship to study at the University of Queensland, Australia, where he received his veterinary degree with honors in 1994. Singapore, like Hong Kong, does not have a veterinary school, so all veterinarians are trained overseas. In 1996, he joined the Primary Production Department, now known as the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA).

Dr. Yap is currently head of the Animal, Meat and Seafood Regulatory Branch of AVA. Like Hong Kong, Singapore, with a population of approximately four million people, imports virtually all the food its citizens consume. Before 1999, 75-80 percent of

all live pigs imported into Singapore were from peninsular Malaysia. Today, Singapore still imports all live broiler chickens and 70 percent of hen eggs consumed from Malaysia. That is why the Singapore veterinarians maintain very close working relationships with their colleagues in Malaysia.

In early 1999, many pigs and humans became ill in Malaysia of a disease first thought to be Japanese B encephalitis (JE). However, some aspects of this outbreak did not quite fit a JE pattern. Subsequently, a novel paramyxovirus was isolated from a patient working on a pig farm in Sungai Nipah, hence the name Nipah virus. There were 11 human cases and one death due to Nipah virus infection in Singapore from 13 to 20 March 1999, involving only slaughterhouse workers. After the outbreak, all pig importation from Malaysia was prohibited, a ban that remains today.

Signs of Nipah virus infection in the Malaysian pigs were neurological and respiratory. In sows and boars, the signs were predominantly neurological, such as head shaking and hind-limb paresis. In weaners and growers, the sick pigs had mainly respiratory signs, such as "barking" coughs and a dog-

like sitting posture to relieve respiratory distress. Bloody and frothy nasal and oral discharges were also seen in both groups of animals. Farmers called it "barking pig disease" because coughing pigs sounded like barking seals. Nipah virus infection totally disrupted live pig trade between Singapore and Malaysia, and now all live pigs are imported into Singapore from Pulau Bulan, an agricultural island belonging to Indonesia. The island exports about 1,000 live pigs per day to Singapore.

In addition to technical aspects of disease, Dr. Yap's job also involves negotiation with counterparts from other countries on matters pertaining to import and export of livestock and their products. He therefore needs to be familiar with topics he studied in the MPVM program, such as field-based methodology for disease control and eradication, and detecting and estimating the prevalence of pathogens in animals and their products imported for food. This knowledge helps him evaluate both AVA domestic programs and programs implemented by trading partners.

In both Hong Kong and Singapore—highly urbanized areas—veterinarians do more than care for companion animals. They play vitally important roles in protecting public health.

## INNOVATIVE RETIREMENT

When Dr. Constantine Genigeorgis, 65, retired from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2003, he had no desire to sit around and do nothing. Instead, he decided to go back to work.

Today he is a research professor at the Department of Forest Products and Technology at the University of Georgia, where in his capacity as the vice director of the Food Hygiene Laboratory, he is the designer of and codirector of a PhD and three Masters in their graduate studies.

**Constantine Genigeorgis**  
65 years old  
University of Georgia  
Athens, GA

After a 30-year career in academia, industry, and government, Dr. Genigeorgis is now a research professor at the University of Georgia. His research interests include the development of new technologies for food safety and quality, and evaluation of food safety proposals for the European Union and the United States. He has served as chairman of the National Food Authority, which will unify all food safety legislation in Greece. At the same time, he is recruited by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services more than 100 lectures each year between 1992 and 1995.

In September 2003 he became professor of food safety at the School of Hygiene and Public Health at the University of Athens, Greece.

Dr. Genigeorgis still remains involved in his research, for on the weekly basis, he travels to the United States to teach courses in his specialty, California and in Greece. His children Alex and Kristy are third-year medical students in Sacramento.

Some of his current projects try to help develop food safety and security programs for the food industry. Since October 2003, he will have been invited to stay longer



F-11 /010199

**REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE**  
**THE ANIMALS AND BIRDS ACT (CHAP.7)**

**VETERINARY CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPORTATION OF  
DOMESTIC BIRDS AND EGGS (6/6) - TABLE EGGS (1/1)**

**I COUNTRY OF EXPORT**

Any country.

**II PURPOSE**

Consumption.

**III IMPORT LICENCE**

The importer must have a valid licence to import issued by the Agri-food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) of Singapore. Each consignment of eggs shall be accompanied by a valid TradeNet Cargo Clearance Permit (CCP) issued.

**IV VETERINARY CERTIFICATION**

Each consignment of eggs shall be accompanied by a veterinary certificate dated within seven days (7) of import and signed or endorsed by a veterinarian duly authorised by the Government Veterinary Authority of the country of export giving details of the consignment (consignor, consignee, quantity, name and address of the farm and certifying to the effect that:

- (i) the country has been free from highly pathogenic avian influenza for the past 12 months prior to export,
- (ii) the eggs are unfertilized and derived from layer flocks kept in a farm accredited for the import of eggs by AVA, Singapore,
- (iii) the farm where the eggs originate has been tested and found to be free from *Salmonella enteritidis* and no case of Newcastle disease, Infectious bronchitis, Infectious laryngotracheitis, Avian encephalomyelitis, Infectious bursal disease, EDS '76 or chronic respiratory disease due to *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* or *M.synoviae*, Salmonellosis (including *Salm. pullorum*), duck plague, or duck viral hepatitis has been diagnosed on the farm for the last three months prior to export,
- (iv) the eggs were clean, fresh and fit for human consumption, and packed into new disposable boxes for export,

**V DECLARATION FROM MASTER/CAPTAIN OF SHIP/AIRCRAFT**

Not required.

**VI QUARANTINE**

No quarantine.

**VII APPLICATION FOR IMPORT LICENCE**

An import licence may be obtained by submitting the completed application form (0791/95) to the Import & Export Division at least one week prior to the date of importation.

**VIII NOTIFICATION OF ARRIVAL**

The importer or his agent shall contact the Quarantine Office as stated in the Import Licence at least one working day before the arrival of the eggs (if necessary).

**IX VETERINARY INSPECTION**

On arrival at the port of disembarkation in Singapore, the eggs and documents (CCP, Veterinary Health Certificate) shall be presented to and examined by an authorised officer. If the consignment of eggs is found to be clean and fresh (samples of eggs with at least B grade average), and documents are in order, the eggs shall be released to the importer. The eggs are subject to bacteriological examination before release at the discretion of the Director-General of Agri-food and Veterinary Services. Samples of eggs may be taken for laboratory monitoring/surveillance.

**X PENALTY**

If the eggs are not clean or fresh or if any document is not in order, the eggs shall be returned or destroyed at the discretion of the the Director-General of Agri-food and Veterinary Services. The exporting farm may be suspended/delisted and the import licence revoked. In addition the importer is subject to prosecution.



F-12 /010199

**XI FEES**

The fee must be paid for each consignment on issuance of the CCP through inter-bank GIRO.

(i) Import Permit (CCP)

)

(ii) Veterinary inspection and processing of documents ) see Fee Schedule: Attachment-2

**XII OTHER REQUIREMENTS/INFORMATION**

- (i) Eggs must be derived from accredited farms. Each consignment must be derived from a single farm only. Application for farm accreditation may be made by supplying detail technical information of the farm e.g. name, address, and location farm and hatchery, size, population of poultry, breed, estimated production per month, sanitation and hygiene, management practice, vaccination regime through the veterinary authority of the country of origin (e.g. Director General of Livestock Services, Indonesia; Director General of Veterinary Services, Malaysia; Director General of Livestock Development, Thailand).
- (ii) New farms and suspended farms accredited and re-instated by AVA respectively after 20 Nov 1998 shall obtain replacement birds (day-old chicks) only from AVA accredited breeder farms and notify AVA of the date of introduction, number of chicks, and source of each batch of chicks within 20 weeks of introduction of the batch of chicks into the farm. The production capacity of the farm shall be based on such notifications only. This condition does not apply to farms which remained accredited as on 20 Nov 98. The requirements for accreditation of breeder farms can be found in section XII (i) of F-11/010199.
- (iii) Any expenditure incurred in the process of importation shall be borne by the importer.
- (iv) Regulations and fees are subject to change without notice notwithstanding the issuance of a licence by AVA.
- (v) Domestic birds include domestic fowls, ducks, geese, turkeys, silkies, qualis, chukar partridges, and pigeons.
- (vi) Table-eggs include eggs of domestic birds which are not fertilized or embryonated.
- (vii) Eggs must be individually labelled with a code (approved by AVA) to identify the producing farm. Labelling must be done with an approved food dye applied with an ink-jet equipment.

**ISSUED BY:**

HEAD/REGULATORY & HEALTH PLANNING DIVISION  
AGRI-FOOD AND VETERINARY AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE  
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E-mail: AVA Email@ava.gov.sg

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TELEPHONE: [65] 62270670  
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E-mail: YAP Him Hoo@ava.gov.sg ←  
TAN Yeow Fon@ava.gov.sg

22 AUG 2003

### Food Items Under Intensive Checks

The following items are currently subjected to intensive inspections upon importation, and the common types of laboratory test / requirements are tabulated for each type of food.

S/No.	Type of Product	Type of Test / Requirements	Submission of Health Certificate / Certificate of Age / Laboratory Test Report To AVA At Point of Import Permit Application
1	<u>Ready-To-Eat Foods</u>	<p><b>Microbiological Tests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Total colony count</li> <li>■ Total coliforms</li> <li>■ Faecal coliforms</li> <li>■ E. coli O157</li> <li>■ <u>Salmonella</u></li> <li>■ Staph enterotoxins</li> <li>■ Bacillus enterotoxins</li> <li>■ Listeria monocytogenes</li> </ul> <p><b>Chemical Tests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sulphur dioxide</li> <li>■ Benzoic acid</li> <li>■ Sorbic acid</li> <li>■ Boric Acid</li> <li>■ Synthetic Colours</li> </ul>	Either : a) Importer to submit laboratory test report; or b) <u>Products may be subjected to inspection and sampling by AVA</u>
2	Traditional kueh	<p><b>Microbiological Tests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Total colony count</li> <li>■ Faecal coliforms</li> <li>■ E. coli</li> <li>■ <u>Staphylococcus aureus</u></li> <li>■ <u>Bacillus cereus</u></li> </ul>	Importer must submit microbiological laboratory test report
3	Coconut milk, shelled coconut, grated coconut, desiccated coconut	<p><b>Microbiological Tests:</b></p>	Importer must submit microbiological laboratory test report.



## Food Safety

### Integrated Food Safety System

Our food safety requirements are stringent and consistent with international standards. Import of farm produce is systematically audited so that health-threatening hazards are removed at source before they are introduced into the food chain. Depending on the type of produce, the food safety measures include:

- review of production system and practices at source
- inspection and accreditation of source farms, abattoirs, imported processed food and food processing establishments
- tagging consignments of primary produce to trace sources
- inspection of primary produce and processed food at the points of entry into Singapore
- laboratory testing on livestock, frozen/chilled meat fish, vegetables, fruits, eggs and processed food
- surveillance of high-risk products based on history of violation of safety standards

## Veterinary Public Health Laboratory

Laboratory testing is critical to AVA's food safety programme. It enables us to detect and analyse a wide range of pathogens and chemical contaminants that may be present in our food supply but are invisible to the naked eye. AVA's Veterinary Public Health Laboratory (VPHL) serves as a one-stop centre for testing of food safety and quality.

We are dedicated to harnessing the latest technology to achieve the highest expertise, technical standards, efficiency and quality assurance in our services. In 2000, we successfully attained accreditation under the Singapore Accreditation Council-Singapore Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (SAC-SINGLAS).

### Contaminants & Confirmatory Chemistry

We detect, identify and quantify chemical contaminants in food using advance technology and internationally accepted methods.

Our range of capabilities includes:

- Toxic metals in seafood and other marine products, offal, processed meat, canned food and water. We employ rapid microwave digestion and acid digestion systems and analysis on Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometers and Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometer.
- Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) using Gas Chromatograph (GC)

We also conduct confirmation tests for a range of contaminants and residues following initial screening tests using GC-MS and LC-MS.

### Pesticide Residue

Our laboratory is designated as the National Reference Centre for pesticide residue testing in food.

We provide analytical support to regulatory programmes to ensure that locally produced and imported primary produce are free from pesticides. We also provide testing services for export health certification and quality control programmes.

Our test capabilities cover a broad range of fungicides, insecticides, herbicides, and growth regulators. These include Organochlorine and Organophosphorous pesticides, Pyrethroids, Carbamates and Chlorophenoxy acetic acids.

We test fresh produce, water and processed food products. We use multi-residue screening methods based on internationally recognised methodology to cover the widest possible range of chemical compounds.

### Microbiology

We employ rapid methods and automation for the detection, identification and enumeration of food-borne pathogens and microbiological hygiene indicators. Food-borne pathogens are detected through rapid test kits, selective media, immunoassays and gene technology. These include common and emerging

pathogens such as

- • Salmonella  
• Shigella  
• Vibrios  
• Yersinia  
• Clostridium  
• Campylobacter  
• Listeria  
• Escherichia coli O157:H7  
• Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci

#### Toxins

We screen toxins in food and animal feedstuff for import control and export health certification.

Our range of capabilities includes:

- Mycotoxins which include aflatoxins B and G in grains and nuts, aflatoxin M in milk and Ochratoxins.
- Marine biotoxins produced by toxigenic strains of algae (Red Tide) which can accumulate in fish and shellfish. These toxins include:
  - ▣ Paralytic Shellfish Poison (saxitoxin),
  - ▣ Diarrhetic Shellfish Poison (Okadaic acid),
  - ▣ Amnesic Shellfish Poison (Domoic acid)
  - ▣ Ciguatoxin
- Bacterial toxins produced by *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus* in food.
- Other natural toxicants or allergens such as histamine in scombroid fish.

Our internationally recognised test methods include Enzyme-linked Immunoassay, Thin Layer Chromatography, Ion Exchange Chromatography, High Performance Liquid Chromatography and Mouse Bioassay.

#### Physical Quality

Our analysts evaluate canned food to determine the integrity of the can seams and to identify defective products to complement inspection of locally produced and imported products.

Tests on food authenticity to prevent economic fraudulence include:

- Identification of species of origin of raw meat, processed meat products and fish using isoelectric-focussing electrophoresis and gene PCR analysis methods.
- Differentiation of real and imitation sharks' fins using chemical and

## Contact Us

Do feel free to get in touch with us at the following numbers if you have any feedback or pleased to be of assistance to you.

Type of Service	Contact No.	E-mail
General Enquiry	62221211	<u>AVA_Email@ava.gov.sg</u>
Feedback	63257625	<u>LIM-LQW_Meow Hua</u>
Quality Service Manager	1800-2262250	<u>AVA_qsm@ava.gov.</u>
Feedback on Animal & Bird Nuisance	1800-4761600	<u>AVA_CAWC</u>
Feedback on Cruelty to Animals	64719987	<u>AVA_CAWC</u>
<b>Farmland Information</b>		
Tenancy	63257676	<u>LIM_Bock Seng</u>
Land Availability	63257662	
<b>Farm Consultancy &amp; Technical Services</b>		
Horticulture Production	67519820	<u>LAM-CHAN_Lee_Tla</u>
Ornamental Fish & Freshwater Foodfish Production	67519852	<u>LING Kai Huat</u>
Marine Foodfish Production	63257637	<u>WEE Joo Yong</u>
Animal Production & Husbandry	63165188 63165188	<u>NG Fook Kheong</u>
<b>Laboratory Diagnostic &amp; Testing Services</b>		
Fresh Food Produce / Food Products	67952822/ 67952823/ 67952829	<u>Helen PHANG</u>
Animal, Bird, Fish Diseases	63165168 63165188	<u>Charlene FERNANDI</u>
Fish Diseases	63165140 63165164	<u>Susan Kueh</u>
Plant Health & Pests	63165168 63185188	<u>YIK Choi Pheng</u>
<b>Licenses &amp; Permits</b>		
Fish Health Certificate, Ornamental Fish Import & Export License / Permit	67519809/4	<u>Poh Yew Kwang</u>
Plants & Plant Products Export Certification/Import Permit	67519842	<u>YONG Taik Chai</u>
Animal Exhibition / Pet Shop License	64719996	<u>AVA_CAWC</u>
Dog License	64719987	<u>AVA_CAWC</u>
Farms	63257629 / 63257678	-
Sea based Fish Farms & Kelong	63257627	-

Licenses		
Dragon Fish Farm & Retail Shop Registration	67519847	<u>TEO Slang Hong</u>
Fisherman, Fishing Vessels & Fishing Gears License	62579760	<u>Adam F Mendez</u>
Meat & Fish Establishment License	63257100	<u>Jannie WAN</u>
Veterinary License	63257687	<u>CHUA Tze Hoong</u>
Animals, Birds and Veterinary Biologics Import/Export/Transhipment Permit	63257836	<u>YAP Him Hoo</u> ←
CITES Import/Export/Transhipment Permit	63257349	<u>LYE Fong Keng</u>
Meat Import Permit / License	63257617	<u>LIOW Chin Chog</u>
Meat & Fish Products Export Certification	67952822	<u>Helen PHANG</u>
Fish Import Permit / License	63257102	<u>LEE Woei Sing</u>
Fruits & Vegetables Import Permit / License	63257620	<u>Lily LING</u>
Port Clearance Permit (Senoko Fishing Port)	62576721	<u>POON Kok Wah</u>
Port Clearance Permit (Jurong Fishing Port)	62651680	<u>CHONG Voon Hin</u>
Pesticide Registration / Pesticide Operator Certificate (for Agricultural Use Only)	63257680	<u>LOW Bee Leng</u>
Processed Food Export Health Certificate & Processed Food Establishment Upgrading	63250781	<u>Diana Koh</u>
Setting Up of Food Processing Establishment	63258492	<u>Ng Eng Siong</u>
Food Labeling and Consultation	63258552	<u>Diana Lee</u>
Importation of Processed Food	63258369	<u>Ahmad RAHMAN</u>
Destruction of Unwholesome Food	63258369	<u>Ahmad RAHMAN</u>

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## Singapore - Slaughterhouses resume business with the lifting of poultry import ban

The return of live chickens from Malaysia also meant that Singapore's 14 slaughterhouses were back in business. They processed thousands of chickens which will be in the hands of eager buyers by Friday morning. Stringent checks were made by AVA officers to ensure that none of the chickens sent to the slaughterhouse was sick. Once the inspections were over, the chickens were thoroughly cleaned and then slaughtered. Then came the all-important post-slaughter checks where trained officers inspect the chickens' organs. Those which fail the checks are discarded. One inspector said: "I'm a veterinarian and I've been trained to recognise a sick bird from a normal bird. But sometimes a diseased bird may not show external signs. So only after it's slaughtered you look at the organs - the liver, the lungs, look at the colour, see if there's any funny lesions, abscesses then you can fully decide whether the chicken is healthy or not." Fresh eggs and chicken on the table again Just 12 hours after the trucks rolled in from Malaysia with the first supply of live chickens in six weeks, Singaporeans were enjoying their first taste of fresh chicken at Wee Nam Kee Chicken Rice in Thomson Road yesterday evening. "I've been looking forward to this," said Madam Irene Wong, who owns a restaurant in Orchard Road. "Fresh chicken is so much sweeter and more tender." Madam Wong's jubilation was echoed by many in the poultry industry yesterday. From Malaysian poultry and egg farmers to Singapore proprietors of poultry slaughterhouses and hawkers, the buzz was palpable following the partial lift of the ban. All in, trucks delivered 1.4 million eggs, 170,000 chickens and 3,700 ducks yesterday from the two bird-flu free states of Malacca and Johor, said the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA). From 6.07am, lorries trundled into Tuas checkpoint, each with 120,000 eggs from Malacca. About eight hours later, lorries laden with chickens and ducks arrived from Johor. What slowed them was the longer-than-expected checks by the Malaysian Customs, of their papers certifying their fowl was free of the flu. Said truck driver Teo Hock Song, 32, who spent four hours waiting for his stock of 4,320 chickens from Pekan Nenas to clear Malaysian Customs: "It's worth the wait. We're just happy and relieved to bring in our stocks again." Authorities on both sides are intent on ensuring the imports are safe for consumption, said Dr Yap Him Hoo, head of AVA's animal, meat and seafood regulatory branch. Dr Yap, 33, who led a team of four in inspecting the poultry and eggs at the Checkpoint, said: "The bio-security measures are all in place, both across the Causeway and over here." Yesterday's supplies have yet to fully restore to the 120,000 chickens, 20,000 ducks and two million eggs that used to arrive daily from Malaysia. AVA expects everything to return to normal in about a month's time. But there will be more chickens than usual, at least for the next few days, said the secretary of the Poultry Merchants' Association, Mr Chew Kian Huat, who is also the managing director of local slaughterhouse Simmeh Poultry Processing. The oversupply is from the six-week ban, said Mr Chew, who was at the checkpoint to receive his first two trucks from Pekan Nenas, Johor, each with more than 4,000 chickens. However, the supply of ducks will take longer to return to pre-ban levels because most of the AVA-accredited farms are in Perak. Eggs, too, will fall short because only seven out of the 17 egg farms in Johor and Malacca have adequate biosecurity measures in place. Some Malaysian eggs were reportedly being sold at 25 cents each yesterday. While they cost less than other eggs, which in past weeks rose to as high as 70 cents each, the price is still above pre-ban levels of 13 to 19 cents. NTUC FairPrice supermarket assured that about 10,000 of the Malaysian chickens, slaughtered and chilled, will fill the shelves of its 76 stores today.

Published 10/01/2004

Source: Channel News Asia/The Straits Times



M

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